

Message Text

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TO USMISSION GENEVA PRIORITY

INFO ALL NATO CAPITALS PRIORITY

AMEMBASSY LONDON PRIORITY

AMEMBASSY MOSCOW PRIORITY

AMEMBASSY SOFIA PRIORITY

USMISSION USNATO PRIORITY

AMEMBASSY BELGRADE PRIORITY

AMEMBASSY BERLIN PRIORITY

AMEMBASSY STOCKHOLM PRIORITY

AMEMBASSY HELSINKI PRIORITY

USDEL MBFR VIENNA PRIORITY

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SUBJECT: MAY 2 ROUNDUP: PRESS ITEMS OF ARMS CONTROL
INTEREST

LONDON FOR AMB/EX, SOFIA FOR AMBASSADOR

1. RICHARD BURT OF NEW YORK TIMES, QUOTING OFFICIALS IN
WASHINGTON, REPORTED THAT CARTER ADMINISTRATION, DURING
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VANCE'S VISIT TO MOSCOW, AGREED TO VAGUELY WORDED PROVISION
THAT WOULD LIMIT FUTURE U.S. COOPERATION ON NUCLEAR MATTERS
WITH ITS NATO ALLIES. BURT SAID PROVISION, ARTICLE 12 OF
PROPOSED SALT AGREEMENT, "SAYS THAT 'IN ORDER TO INSURE
VIABILITY' OF AN ARRANGEMENT LIMITING SOVIET AND AMERICAN
STRATEGIC MISSILES AND BOMBERS, BOTH NATIONS WILL NOT TAKE
ACTIONS 'THROUGH THIRD STATES' THAT WOULD WEAKEN IT. IT

DOES NOT SPECIFY WHAT TYPES OF ACTIVITY WOULD BE RULED OUT IN ACCORD." THIS PROVISION, BURT EXPLAINED, REPRESENTS COMPROMISE BETWEEN PREVIOUS U.S. AND USSR POSITIONS. OFFICIALS SAID IT REMOVES ONE OF FEW REMAINING OBSTACLES TO ACHIEVING NEW ARMS AGREEMENT LATER THIS YEAR, BURT ADDED. WHILE VAGUE, PROVISION STILL IS MORE SPECIFIC THAN THAT ORIGINALLY DESIRED BY AMERICAN NEGOTIATORS, "WHICH WOULD HAVE AVOIDED ANY MENTION OF 'THIRD STATES' IN PROPOSED ACCORD. HOWEVER, ORIGINAL SOVIET PROPOSAL WAS FAR MORE SPECIFIC CALLING FOR DIRECT BAN ON TRANSFER OF STRATEGIC MISSILES AND 'COMPONENTS, TECHNICAL DESCRIPTIONS AND BLUE-PRINTS FOR THESE ARMS.'" BURT SAID OFFICIALS STATED THAT IT WAS NECESSARY TO ADOPT "FALLBACK" POSITION THAT INCLUDED SOME LIMITATION ON NUCLEAR COOPERATION WITH ALLIED COUNTRIES IN ORDER TO BREAK SIX-MONTH DEADLOCK OVER THIS ISSUE. "APPARENTLY U.S. FIRST OFFERED THIS ALTERNATIVE DURING MR. VANCE'S RECENT VISIT TO MOSCOW, BUT OFFICIALS SAID WESTERN ALLIANCE AGREED TO THIS APPROACH OVER SIX MONTHS AGO," BURT REPORTED. "BECAUSE COMPROMISE LANGUAGE FINALLY AGREED TO IN MOSCOW DOES NOT SPECIFICALLY RULE OUT TRANSFER OF AMERICAN ARMS TO EUROPE, ALLIED GOVERNMENTS ARE SAID TO BE SATISFIED WITH ARRANGEMENT. MOSCOW, AT SAME TIME, IS SAID TO BE PLEASED THAT WASHINGTON HAS AGREED IN PRINCIPLE THAT EUROPEAN-AMERICAN ARMS PROJECTS COULD UNDERCUT PROPOSED ACCORD. 'IT'S A PURPOSELY AMBIGUOUS STATEMENT THAT NOBODY WANTS TO QUESTION TOO

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CLOSELY AT THIS POINT,' OBSERVED AN OFFICIAL. 'JOB NOW IS TO PUSH ON AND RESOLVE TOUGH QUESTIONS THAT ARE STILL IN DISPUTE.'

2. BERNARD WEINRAUB OF NEW YORK TIMES SAID DEFENSE DEPARTMENT OFFICIALS "ARE ANGRY AND DISMAYED" OVER DECISION BY HOUSE ARMED SERVICES COMMITTEE TO DELETE FUNDS FOR AN AIRCRAFT TO CARRY CRUISE MISSILES. WEINRAUB SAID AT THIS POINT DEFENSE SECRETARY BROWN IS PREPARING TO MAKE "FORCEFUL EFFORT" TO GET SENATE ARMED SERVICES COMMITTEE TO RESTORE 41.2 MILLION DOLLARS REQUESTED FOR DEVELOPING SO-CALLED CRUISE MISSILE CARRIER. PENTAGON OFFICIALS SAID MOVE BY HOUSE COMMITTEE TO ELIMINATE THESE FUNDS FROM DEFENSE BUDGET FOR NEXT FISCAL YEAR DEALS POTENTIAL BLOW TO STRATEGIC NUCLEAR PLANS AND TO U.S. NEGOTIATING LEVERAGE IN ARMS TALKS WITH SOVIET UNION. DEFENSE OFFICIAL SAID "RUSSIANS HAVE SAID THAT CRUISE MISSILES ARE ONE OF THEIR GREATEST CONCERNS AND PERCEIVE IT AS ONE OF OUR FOREMOST MILITARY THREATS. IT'S STRANGE THAT ARMED SERVICES COMMITTEE SHOULD TRY TO KNOCK OUT WEAPON THAT RUSSIANS ARE SO WORRIED ABOUT." CARRIER, AS ENVISAGED BY PENTAGON, PROBABLY WOULD BE MILITARIZED VERSION OF DC-10

OR 747 COMMERCIAL TRANSPORT, WEINRAUB SAID. MANY MEMBERS OF HOUSE ARMED SERVICES COMMITTEE MAINTAIN THAT PLANES CARRYING CRUISE MISSILES ARE AN INADEQUATE ALTERNATIVE TO PLANES LIKE B-1 BOMBER, WHICH IS AN EXPENSIVE, MANNED PENETRATOR, TIMES CORRESPONDENT NOTED. HOUSE COMMITTEE SAID IT WAS REJECTING PLANS TO DEVELOP CRUISE MISSILE CARRIER BECAUSE "ITS VULNERABILITY, HIGH COST AND PERFORMANCE CONSTRAINTS DID NOT JUSTIFY INITIATION OF SUCH MULTI-BILLION PROGRAM."

3. WASHINGTON POST CORRESPONDENTS PETER OSNOS AND DAVID OTTAWAY, IN INTERVIEW WITH SHEIKH ZAKI YAMANI, SAID SAUDI OIL MINISTER WARNED THAT REFUSAL BY WASHINGTON TO SELL F-15 JET FIGHTERS TO HIS COUNTRY WOULD HAVE AN ADVERSE UNCLASSIFIED

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EFFECT ON SAUDI ARABIA'S PRESENT OIL PRODUCTION POLICY AND SUPPORT FOR U.S. DOLLAR. POST CORRESPONDENTS SAID "THIS IS THOUGHT TO BE FIRST TIME HIGH OFFICIAL HAS PUBLICLY WARNED OF POSSIBLE CONSEQUENCES OF FAILURE OF F-15 DEAL."

4. ROBERT KAISER AND MURREY MARDER OF WASHINGTON POST REPORTED THAT SENATE FOREIGN RELATIONS COMMITTEE SCHEDULED HEARINGS ON MIDEAST JET SALES PACKAGE AFTER MAKING PRO FORMA REQUEST TO PRESIDENT CARTER TO WITHDRAW HIS PROPOSAL FOR 30 TO 90 DAYS SO SENATE SUBCOMMITTEE COULD TRAVEL TO MIDDLE EAST FOR ON-SPOT INVESTIGATION. KAISER AND MARDER SAID REQUESTED DELAY, MADE LARGELY TO PLEASE COMMITTEE CHAIRMAN SPARKMAN, "APPEARED UNLIKELY TO WIN PRESIDENTIAL ACQUIESCENCE." KAISER AND MARDER SAID INFORMED SOURCES IN ADMINISTRATION AND IN CONGRESS FELT THAT OPPONENTS OF PROPOSED PLANE SALES APPARENTLY DO NOT HAVE SUFFICIENT VOTES IN HOUSE AND SENATE TO BLOCK TRANSACTIONS, THOUGH THEY NOTED MOOD COULD CHANGE BEFORE FINAL VOTE.

5. MEG GREENFIELD, WRITING IN MAY 8 NEWSWEEK, SAID UNTIL RECENTLY SHE FELT IT FARFETCHED THAT SENATE WOULD REJECT SALT TWO TREATY. "BUT SOME INQUIRIES AROUND SENATE AND WITHIN ADMINISTRATION HAVE CHANGED MY MIND: I THINK THAT AS OF TODAY, PRESIDENT COULDN'T GET SENATE TO APPROVE KIND OF NUCLEAR ARMS DEAL BEING NEGOTIATED WITH SOVIET UNION, AND THAT IT WILL BE MANY, MANY MONTHS BEFORE HE CAN." GREENFIELD SAID "OPPOSITION IN SENATE IS LIKELY TO FOCUS NOT ON AGREEMENT LIMITING OFFENSIVE STRATEGIC NUCLEAR SYSTEMS, BUT RATHER ON THREE-YEAR PROTOCOL LIMITING TESTING AND DEPLOYMENT OF CERTAIN WEAPONS (E.G., CRUISE MISSILES) THAT U.S. WOULD EVENTUALLY USE TO BOLSTER OR REPLACE OLDER AND VULNERABLE SYSTEMS. ADMINISTRATION OFFICIALS ARGUE, ACCURATELY, THAT THESE LIMITS WOULD NOT UNCLASSIFIED

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INTERFERE WITH ANYTHING WE INTEND TO DO, SINCE WE WOULDN'T BE READY TO GO BEYOND TESTING AND DEPLOYMENT CONSTRAINTS ANYWAY FOR THREE YEARS. BUT RESPONSE TO THIS GOES TO HEART OF CARTER PROBLEM: IT IS THAT CUMULATIVE IMPRESSION MANY SENATORS HAVE OF ADMINISTRATION IS THAT IT WOULD NOT HAVE STOMACH OR FORTITUDE TO LET PROTOCOL EXPIRE AT END OF THREE YEARS, THAT SOMEHOW IT COULD BE BULLIED AND PRESSED INTO EXTENDING IT. THAT MAY BE UNFAIR. IT MAY ALSO BE WRONG. BUT IT IS REAL AND GROWING SENTIMENT AMONG THOSE WHO WILL BE ASKED TO RATIFY ANY AGREEMENT CARTER REACHES... IN SENATE THEY ARE LINKING CURRENT DISARRAY OF ADMINISTRATION WITH PLAUSIBILITY OF ITS PLEDGES ON ENFORCING TOUGH AND UNSENTIMENTAL SALT AGREEMENT. THAT IS WHY, ABOVE ALL ELSE, CARTER NEEDS TIME--AND TIME USED WISELY AND WELL OVERSEAS--BEFORE HE PRESENTS SENATE WITH ANY ARMS CONTROL AGREEMENT AT ALL." VANCE

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